



STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Developmental Services of Nebraska

2610 West M Court

Lincoln, NE

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April 12, 2005

10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Present: *Sharon Bloechle, Don Crouch, Eileen Curry, Linda Douglas, Kay Gayle Hahn, Sandy Ham, David Jelinek, Les Kimmons, Tim Kolb, Frank Lloyd, Michael Newman, Vicki Rasmussen, Mark Schultz, Pearl Van Zandt, and Merwyn Vavrina*

Absent: *Kim Boyce, Sue Gieschen, Kay Grone, Marc Hultine, and Susan Rocker*

Minutes by *Cheryle Adams*

Gayle Hahn called the meeting to order

I Public Comment: None

II. New Member

A. New member, Linda Douglas was introduced to the council. She is the SPED Director for Lincoln Public Schools. State Board approved the appointment January 6, 2005.

III. Approval of Agenda

Motion made by Merwyn to change date to be 4/12/2005. Les seconded. Motion carried, agenda approved.

IV. Approval of Minutes from December 14, 2004

Motion made by Pearl to approve the December 14, 2004 minutes. Sharon seconded. Motion passed, minutes approved.

V. Director's Report (*Frank Lloyd*)

1. Letters were set out to three community providers, Developmental Services of Nebraska, Goodwill Industries of Greater Nebraska, ServiceLinc. We have asked these providers to send us a proposal on how they would provide employment services to people with traumatic brain injuries. The pilot programs would be funded for 2 – 3 years. Frank stated the money

is not from federal funds. He is looking for providers who would utilize existing resources in their community. VR would provide funds up to \$100,000. The second year the commitment will be no more than \$100,000, but close to that amount the same for the third year. We don't know what the model will look like, but hope this will help successful models to promote TBI legislation for extended supports for this population. VR is not looking at funding existing programs, but helping new programs.

Goodwill Industries and Developmental Services of Nebraska have a strong commitment to that population. This will help them to expand their services. Susan Rocker provides supported employment services through ServiceLinc and is in self-employment for the TBI population.

- 2 The regional RSA offices will be closing as of September 30th. This is strictly at the Administration's discretion. There is discussion with CSAVR as to what type of support we can give to keep the regional office open. RSA doesn't have a plan to comply with monitoring requirements. CSAVR has opposed this action to close the regional offices.
- 3 Reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act. The house bill did not include the WIA plus amendment. DOL wants to consolidate funds from several programs into a block grant giving the governor authority to distribute. CCD (Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities) with one hundred agency members oppose WIA plus. This is clearly top priority with Department of labor and the administration with their intent to serve employers, training workers for their particular industry.
- 4 Parent Planner. We got a good response from the schools on this publication. SPED has paid to have a second printing. Every time a VR staff person sees a person in the school and places their student in our transition program, their name is included on our parent planner mailing list. They are also sent copies of the Making it Work.
- 5 State Rehabilitation Council Annual Report. Everyone liked how it looked and read. Council members are free to discuss VR's performance on any of the standards at future meetings.
- 6 Region VII RCEP provided Resilience training for 13, VR staff. The staff felt the skills introduced in the training would be helpful to them in their personal and professional life. VR will provide a copy of the Resilience Factor (the book on which the training is based) to VR staff who are interested in learning more about the value of resilience training. Those who read the book will have an opportunity to discuss the application of the technique to their work through area study groups.

VI. Old Business

1. RSA Training in Kansas City, (*Don Crouch*)

This was a conference was held in Kansas City with the purpose of training SRC council members. Council members that attended were Pearl, Merwyn, Gayle, Don. They offered 4 videos illustrating the history of VR. Afterward there were breakout sessions discussing how meetings were handled meeting and public forums. Merwyn said all this training is on their website. Gayle will let Cheryle know the website and she will email the website out to the

council members. The member' expectations of the training was to learn whatever they could learn.

Pearl commented that she was interested to hear what the other states were doing and their comments. She felt good that our council had a lot to contribute.

We will use the training videos when we have a new member, making this their initiation. Each video is about 10 minutes long. Don showed one today. The others will be shown at the next meeting

2. Update on VREAP (*Jim Coyle*)

VREAP—is the equity assistance program. This is to help with funding self-employment businesses in Nebraska. The idea is to use as a funding source for clients that are developing their own businesses. The first loan was made in June 2004. This program has been active 1 year. 15 loans have been completed to date, with \$180,000 being dispensed. Thirteen of those loans were in very rural areas and 2 inside the city of Lincoln. The cap amount is \$15,000 with the average loan is \$8,000 with interest being 5-6%. VR has funded some very unique businesses, i.e., leather tanning, saddle making, goat farming, airbrushing, etc.

US Bank, Commercial Federal, First National and Well Fargo have changed their attitude toward people with disabilities. A person has to be a VR client to have access to this. The board approving these loans is the high officials of the bank.

This is not a VR program, this is a private—not for profit. VR can't set up this kind of arrangement. Jim sits on the board as a non-voting member. VREAP has hired grant writer again, to do additional fund raising. Don discussed the self-employment publication being printed that will basically touts the success of our self-employment program. This will have a small article about VREAP. The publication will have 9-10 stories of people who have successfully started businesses under the self-employment program. Over 115 businesses have been started with a 90% statewide success rate. Congressman Tom Osborn is very much interested in entrepreneurship and is interested in the self-employment program. The publication will include information on Mark's telework program. The publication should be available before the August meeting.

VREAP looks at a consumer's last two years looking to insure they haven't declared bankruptcy and that they have made some effort to accommodate some of their debts. Wayne Miller, one of our consultants, has done a tremendous job. He makes everything very clear—his goal is that you are going to be successful.

CAP—Vicki stated that there were a few disagreeing with self-employment report. Those she had reviewed, VR made the right decision. Business was not feasible as the market wasn't there. Sometimes you have to be blunt with the client.

3. Meeting Place in August (*Don Crouch*)

The next meeting will be out at ESU #10, Cozad Diagnostic Center on August 9th. In order to have this meeting occur, we need to insure that enough members attend so the council is

able to have a quorum. Cheryle will check in June to find out who will be able to attend. It was discussed that if someone absolutely could not attend, that we could connect them via speakerphone. This would still give us a quorum.

VII. New Business

1. Presentation on Orientation Program for Post-Secondary Education (*Dave Jelinek*)

Dave presented a slide presentation as well as distributed materials to council members. These orientation materials are given to students and parents that are going into post-secondary education. Dave stresses that he wants both student and parent to participate in the process. Dave has around 95 students on 35 campuses that he is assisting. It is important to explain to students and parents how the VR funding works. He had some fairly mixed crowds with the response on the evaluation being favorable. These are things that students will need to know as they go on to post secondary education. This packet gives information on financial aid, hints of different ways to look for funding. He stresses to the student and parents that “there has to be a commitment to go to school.”

Then they get into looking at available resources. A budget is developed make sure that person can handle class academically as well as economically.

VIII. Reports

A. CAP Reports (*Vicki Rasmussen*)

Vicki reported she attended a Regional CAP meeting in Kansas City with Kansas, Iowa and Missouri. She also met with VR's Program Directors to review the Quarterly CAP Report. Questions and comments were taken regarding the CAP report.

B. SILC Report (*Tim Kolb*)

The legislature is still working on the Medicaid buy-in.

The initiative concerning risk has not moved out of committee.

THE SILC Ad Hoc is working on a Ticket to Work version of the current MIWD (Medicaid Insurance for Workers with Disabilities) to enable more people with disabilities to seek and maintain competitive employment without fear of losing their Medicaid eligibility. Tim talked to Jeff Santema, the legislative bill has a 1.7 million fiscal note. Fiscal people have to account as to what might really be available. SILC is trying to get this out of committee.

C. ATP Report (*Mark Schultz*)

ATP's funding is in jeopardy if an amendment to the federal budget to include an appropriation for the Tech Act is not passed. Concerned people need to contact their congressmen to continue funding for the Tech Act. Program.

An advisory council has been established with the first meeting on April 27th. They will provide input on goals and activities for the next three years. This will be turned into a state

plan for Assistive Technology. The administration of the program goes through RSA.

Assistive Tech has a new agreement with Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation to do technology assessments. They have three referrals with a long laundry list of equipment and devices. They will meet with the referrals and VAVR to decide what are the eligible items and what are not. For veterans this could be a good source.

Those veterans coming back from Iraq and those older veterans will be needing assistive technology.

D. Committee Reports

1. Client Services Satisfaction (*Sandy Ham*)

The committee met earlier today to go over the survey results that were received back from VR staff. Sandy said she had a tremendous response, and broke it down according to years of service. The committee felt that years of service influenced how staff responded and the changes they would like to make. There were some reoccurring themes and comments.

Several things were identified

- a. Confusion by staff as to what the exceptions are that allow staff not to use the IPE notebook.
- b. Exceptions that aren't included DD & LD
- c. Lack of flexibility with the notebook. There was some concern about not being able to individualize this to fit the consumer. Sandy reported that some staff felt there is flexibility in how one presents it and pick and choose what parts they use. Other staff reported they didn't feel it was flexible.
- d. The length was an issue, some felt that it was longer than it needed to be, it could be more concise.

Staff that have been with VR 5 years or less found it to be a valuable planning tool. The majority staff that have been here longer didn't feel it was a benefit. The survey was broken down by less than 1 year, 1-5 years, 5-15 years. Staff that had been with VR over 15 years were very responsive and had lots of comments.

Frank commented that it is not intended to give to consumers to fill out and bring back. Consumers should be able to develop their own plan. An instrument was needed that would foster self-exploration and to have some structure for the staff. Some activities every question needs to be answered, there are other sections in which not every question needs to be answered.

The committee that put together the notebook is open to change. Changes need to be made to the area of exploration. Frank wants to know out of the 14 areas are there any that should be eliminated.

Frank would like to see the council make recommendations over any of the 14 areas of the notebook. The committee would work on revising the content of the 14 areas, creating a balance between having too many questions and not enough questions.

Comment was that experienced staff feel offended, but new staff like it as it gives them direction.

The notebook was phased in and has gone through multiple revisions. An email was sent out last summer looking for feedback before doing the second printing. Sandy said she didn't get any response.

A was motion made by Sandy to go back and look and see what has been written down for exceptions. Is it correct, if not, make the corrections and notify staff again as to any changes. Vicki seconded the motion. The motion was approved and carried.

2. Interagency/Annual Report (*Eileen Curry*)

Everyone commented on how nicely done the Annual Report was. Sandy was recognized for her efforts.

Eileen stated that the staff survey has been completed and they would like some direction from the council as to what do to with this information.

The committee also assisted with the annual report and has worked on increasing consumer services.

Eileen will update the council at the next meeting.

3. Strategic Issues (*Frank Lloyd*)

Frank commented that this committee used to have 5 goals, but felt some of these are appropriate under the Client Service Committee.

- a. Mental health reform, expanding the mental health projects around the state. VR in collaboration with Behavioral Health Reform, will be working with Region V in Lincoln and Goodwill Industries of Greater Nebraska in North Platte to establish employment programs for people with mental illness in their local area.
- b. Loan Programs, increasing collaboration between Easter Seals and VREAP. Make staff more aware of those programs.
- c. Increase VR collaboration with other support groups. Working with the Nebraska one-stops, staff continue to be located in all of the one-stops.
- d. Look at developing "career cruising" an Internet web based application. This would track student career exploration from year to year. Where they have been, where they are going, a history of progression.
- e. Transition—expanding VR's role in working with schools. Provide classroom opportunities for staff. Select 1-2 things to work with in the classroom, 2-3 things that can be used out in the community.

Don mentioned another area that needed attention—recruitment. Need to get more business people involved with the council. It was discussed that we almost need a recruitment committee. Pearl thought that the executive committee could take on this task. If anyone has any ideas on recruiting, please let Don know. We need people from

the business sector. Sharon suggested maybe someone associated with the banks Jim Coyle is working with might be interested.

Frank suggested creating a new committee—employer relations committee. This could be more important than an interagency committee, changing them to employer relations.

Gayle made note of it and will talk about it at the next meeting

Merywn made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Les seconded. The motion to adjourn the meeting was approved. Meeting adjourned.

The next meeting is scheduled for August 9, 2005 at the ESU #10 Diagnostic Center in Cozad, Nebraska.